

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 HA-05 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /088 W
-----076534 221023Z /11

O 220940Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8486
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

CONFIDENTIAL TEHRAN 4878

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK, IR, PEPR, EAID
SUBJ: REPORTED IRANIAN STATEMENT ON BHUTTO

REF: ISLAMABAD 5019

1. PRESS HERE MAY 22 PROMINENTLY CARRIES REPORT THAT IRANIAN
AMBASSADOR ZAND FARD CALLED ON PAK FOREIGN SECRETARY SHAHNAWAZ
YESTERDAY TO DENY TRUTH OF BBC REPORT THAT PRIMIN AMOUZEGAR
HAD SAID IRAN WILL STOP ALL ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN IF DEATH
SENTENCE AGAINST BHUTTO IS CARRIED OUT.

2. MFA SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED DENIAL TO US AND SAYS OFFENDING
JOURNALIST, BBC'S RESIDENT CORRESPONDENT ANDREW WHITLEY, WROTE
LETTER OF APOLOGY TO AMOUZEGAR YESTERDAY IN WHICH HE STATES
HE MISUNDERSTOOD FACTS ON WHICH HE BASED HIS REPORT. THUS,
AS FAR AS GOI IS CONCERNED THE WHOLE THING IS A BIG MISTAKE.

3. COMMENT: FYI ONLY. WE BELIEVE WHITLEY PICKED UP
THIS STORY QUITE CASUALLY FROM VISITING AMERICAN
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CORRESPONDENT WHO HAD INTERVIEWED AMOUZEGAR ON BACKGROUND
BASIS. IF AMOUZEGAR SAID SOMETHING OF THIS SORT IN
PRIVATE, HE IS CERTAIN TO DENY IT--IF FOR NO OTHER REASON
THAN THAT THE SHAH DOES NOT CONSIDER HIS PRIME MINISTER
A SPOKESMAN ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE WHOLE EPISODE WILL
PROBABLY TAKE AMOUZEGAR (AND WHITLEY) SOME TIME TO LIVE
DOWN. IT MAY ALSO REQUIRE SOME FURTHER IRANIAN MASSAGING

OF PAK EGOS. WHAT EFFECT, IF ANY, THIS LEAK (WHICH WE DO NOT BELIEVE WAS INTENTIONAL) MIGHT HAVE ON EFFECTIVENESS OF KNOWN IRANIAN REPRESENTATIONS IN FAVOR OF CLEMENCY FOR BHUTTO, ISLAMABAD IS IN A BETTER POSITION THAN WE TO JUDGE.

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